



Christianity and Crisis

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Labor Legislation

IN considering new Labor legislation there is one criterion that is in danger of being forgotten. It is the effect of such legislation upon the strength and the health of the Labor Movement itself as an indispensable pillar of American democracy. Legislation conceived by the enemies of Labor, which is passed to punish Labor will solve none of the real problems that do call for solution, and it will strike a blow against the desirable gains that Labor has won in a long and bitter struggle. The House of Representatives has allowed itself to become a tool of anti-Labor forces, whereas the Senate Committee has reported out a bill that shows a sense of fairness. In addition to the desire to destroy the power of the Labor Movement on the part of its old enemies there is also the popular mood that is created by the fact that whenever Labor uses the strike, which is ultimately the basis of its only forms of power, it is put in the wrong with a large part of the middle classes. It is difficult for the average middle class person to look behind the fact that Labor is the immediate cause of the loss of some service, to the more significant fact that the real cause is an industrial dispute for which both workers and employers share responsibility. Whatever the merits of the case may be, Labor is usually blamed.

The leaders of the Labor Movement at the present time have made a mistake in not admitting that legislation is necessary to protect the public against the consequences of prolonged industrial deadlocks, and that some legislation may be needed to protect workers against undemocratic processes within Labor Unions. A frank recognition that there is a public interest that does have a right of way over the interests of every section of society and the willingness to work out procedures that would safeguard that interest might well have forestalled much of the present anti-Labor feeling that is registered by the vote in the House of Representatives. It does not make the failure of Labor at this point less of a mistake, but it does explain it in part to remember that the Labor Movement has been strong for little more than a decade, that it had to fight for its existence until the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935. Its spirit of defensiveness and its sensitivity to all criticism are natural results

of this long fight. In 1935 there were about 3,500,000 Labor Union members in the United States and now there are over 14,000,000. That extraordinary advance still seems precarious, and Labor fears that any important legal change would be used to destroy these gains. The leaders of Labor have learned from the history of Labor's struggle against one legal hurdle after another how seemingly innocent words of the law can be used by courts to defeat them.

American churchmen at this juncture when far-reaching decisions may be made about the future of the Labor Movement should not forget what they have said in calmer times about the importance of a strong Labor Movement. They should not forget that without effective organization the workers are helpless in dealing with the power of organized employers. They should not forget that Labor Unions give to the workers status and dignity that are more important than any narrowly economic advantages. They should not forget that the right to strike is essential for free men, though there may be some public utilities in which employees must yield that right. They should not forget that when they deal with the rights of Labor Unions they are dealing with the conditions for justice for fourteen million union members and their families, more than a third of our population—a third that includes a large part of those who have in the past been most insecure and exploited. Those fourteen million are not all, because we must consider millions more who are eligible for union membership and whose status is better now because of what the unions have accomplished. The present Labor Union membership may not include the real underdogs in our society today, but the expansion of unions, so that they may include less fortunate categories of workers, would be hindered by the bill passed by the House of Representatives. One major fallacy is to speak of the public interest without recognizing how large a part of the public is represented directly or indirectly by the Labor Movement.

A controversial issue like that of the closed shop needs to be approached in the spirit of a report of a commission appointed by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and made up of representatives of man-

agement, unions, the clergy and the public. This Commission brought in a report after a two years study in 1944 which was adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly. It had this to say about the closed shop: "There are situations where the closed shop makes for justice and brotherhood in industrial relations, and there are other situations where it stands in the way of good relations." "The individual Christian is called upon to approach the issue of the closed shop neither with indiscriminating emotion nor with a preconceived theory." These

were wise words in 1944 and they are wise words today. There are several different forms of industrial relationship that give considerable security to unions, such as the closed shop and the union shop, maintenance of membership, etc., and the issues that they raise are not to be settled by thinking in slogans or by wholesale legislation. Again, one of the criteria for judging them should be the need of such security for unions against employers who might take advantage of a period of unemployment to destroy them.—John C. Bennett.

European Impressions

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

A THREE months visit in Europe must not tempt the observer to too many neat generalizations. Yet one is bound to carry away certain impressions, from meeting with many Europeans in many nations.

The most vivid impression concerns the depth of the European pessimism. There is little confidence on the continent that another war can be avoided. This lack of confidence stems from some rather obvious facts, which Americans can discern as well as Europeans. But Europe feels itself closer to the vortex of the storms which devastate the world than we, even though we are, for the moment, the masters of whatever "destiny" human craft and cunning can contrive within the vast forces which move toward construction and destruction in modern history.

Perhaps Europe is more pessimistic than we for the same reason that the back seat driver is more apprehensive about possible accidents on the road than the driver. It knows that we are in the driver's seat, and it is not sure about us. It tends to be rather grateful that we seem to be firm in trying to prevent Russian communism from filling the vacuum on the continent. But it thinks it discerns rather obvious signs of our inexperience in our new role of masters; and it is not at all happy about the loss of British strength. Sometimes the continentals seem to think that we are driving too fast, and speak rather fantastically about our "desire" for a war with Russia. Yet at the same time they express gratitude that we proved, by our policy in Greece and Turkey, that we are conversant with the strategic requirements of this tussle of power.

One cannot help but be struck in Europe by the tremendously important position which America has acquired in the counsels of the world, chiefly because of our dominant economic power. Europe may regard us with grateful or with apprehensive emotions, but it is very conscious of the fact that the lines of

historical destiny now run out from our decisions. Despite my own feeling of the general inadequacy of any nation for the fateful role which we must play and my fear that we are especially inadequate in political wisdom, I felt more and more proud and grateful for the fact that our nation, still given to isolationist illusions several years ago, should seem so firm in its resolve to continue its responsibilities in Europe. I am furthermore just as certain as most Europeans that the strategic measures which we are taking, in Greece and Turkey for instance, are absolutely necessary; though it was rather silly to try to veil this strategy by talk of the necessity of preserving "democratic" governments in these two countries. Neither government is democratic by even a wide stretch of the imagination. What is at stake is not the internal structure of these nations, but the peace of Europe, which cannot be preserved if the communist tide inundates it.

Sometimes the fears of Europe are concerned with our willingness to remain in the game. Do we have lasting power? Are we not too far away to understand the importance of the issues? Will we not grow weary when it becomes apparent that no quick conclusion can be reached in any issue which now engages us? Sometimes the Europeans are afraid primarily because they think we do not have social and political insights to match our technical and strategic ones. They know that the Russian flood must not be allowed to inundate the continent. But they are not certain that we will have a social and economic policy wise enough to bring health to the world which we, for the moment dominate. Europe is not always certain of our motives either. It sees a generous America in the vast relief measures, official and unofficial, which we have sponsored. That is our right hand. But our left hand seems engaged in a mighty thrust of economic power. When we talk of "free trade" in idealistic

terms, Europe grows cynical and declares that we mean, the right of American business to use its superior technical force to drive competitors out of the market.

The final source of European apprehension about us concerns our own health. Europe is quite sure (and this is as true of business circles as of the left) that modern economy cannot be as unmanaged as we pretend. It is quite sure that it cannot afford the luxury of a completely unmanaged economy. But it is almost as certain that we can't afford it either. I do not know how often I was asked the question about the imminent economic catastrophe in America. The fact is taken for granted. Only the degree of imminence seems to be the question.

But European pessimism is derived not merely from apprehensions about us and about the Russians, these two curious new masters of modern destiny. Europe is pessimistic about itself. So many fine promises of wartime have not materialized. The unity between Christians and Marxists, gained in the resistance movements, has not been maintained. For that matter not even the unity between Lutherans and Calvinists, achieved in the Confessional group in Germany, has been preserved. "The ghosts of yesterday" said a former member of one of the resistance movements "stalk over the nations." The old creeds have not been overcome by any genuine new impulse in either religion or politics. The age old struggle between a "Christian right" and the Marxist workers, has not been materially mitigated. Only in Holland and Denmark has a fresh start been made in political parties which are designed to break the fateful embrace between Christian and bourgeois interests on the one hand, and to mitigate the irrelevance of Marxist utopianism on the other. The Dutch and the Danish movements are promising—the Dutch being more powerful than the Danish. But they are isolated. Nothing is more pathetic than the liberal Marxists of continental Europe, mouthing revolutionary phrases in which they no longer believe, either because they think they have to match communist polemics, or because the frame of their thought represents the old wine skin into which they are futilely trying to pour the new wine of a more pragmatic politics. Nothing is more confused than this liberal Marxist middle ground, not knowing whether it hates communism or Christianity more, or rather knowing quite well that it hates communism more but not knowing how to come to terms with the deeper insights of the Christian tradition. Yet perhaps the Christian "right" is more pathetic. For here in the name of Christ, no great struggle for a new community in Europe takes place. Either the Christian right defends middle class interests in the name of Christ, or it defends the institutional interests of the church. This is partly true of the Protestant right but more so of the Catholic conservatism of Europe.

In both Italy and France some generous new lay Catholic impulses emerged from the resistance movements. But the hierarchy has moved in on these Catholic parties. When communists supported Catholics in Italy in order to write into the very constitution the religiously restrictive legislation contained in Mussolini's accord with the Vatican, a new despair gripped the people of Europe who are trying to preserve the middle ground of democracy against both communism and reaction.

One feels that only the insights of the prophets of Israel can do justice to the tragedy of a great European culture, failing to repent under the divine judgments which have shaken it to its foundations. This is the kind of defiance of divine judgment of which the prophets are constantly speaking and which Isaiah predicted in a dark moment would last "until the cities be wasted without inhabitant and the houses without man and the land be utterly desolate."

There are some creative impulses in the church life of Europe, particularly the ecumenical movement itself. But one does feel that the churches from the various nations, as well as our own churches within one nation, have not really begun to be ecumenical in the sense that they are anxious to learn from one another or to borrow each others treasures of faith and grace. Thus, for instance, continental Calvinism is liturgically bare beyond belief, while the Lutheran churches have a beautiful liturgical service. Continental Calvinism does seem unimaginative, particularly when one sees how it is unable to make any effective use of the many beautiful medieval churches which it has inherited. In them the choir is closed off and made into some kind of Bible study room or put to other purposes. Evidently the cruciform plan of the church must be obscured and in any event there must be no altar. The loss in beauty is considerable, not to speak of the loss in sacramental character of the service.

There are of course some very robust religious qualities in this continental Calvinism. But even when it deals with the political realities of its world with a sterner hand than Lutheranism, it sometimes falls into a legalism which is pretty graceless. In Holland, under the leadership of Dr. Henrik Kraemer there is a new movement in the church, which has many dimensions and interests, one of which is to challenge the intimate embrace between religious legalism and bourgeois economic interests.

On the other hand it would be wrong to regard only Calvinism as fruitful in the social and political sphere. A visit to Scandinavia reminds one that the well known faults of German Lutheranism, its uncritical attitude toward government, and its tendency to a transcendentalism which lives above the realm of man's social problems, may well be more German than Lutheran. For these Scandinavian countries have the same kind of political wisdom and the same capacity to make slow and creative

adjustments to new situations which we in the Anglo-Saxon world have long associated with British genius.

It might be worth observing that the Barthian influence seems on the whole to be most creative in the Calvinist churches. There it acts as a leaven to leaven the lump of what is often a graceless legalism. It is probably not so good for Germany, for there it would seem to accentuate an already strong tendency toward transcendentalism. Barth's own political judgments are very shrewd but they are not a part of his theological approach. In Scandinavia they do not seem to pay too much attention to his thought, or at least they are not seriously disturbed by it, though everyone rightly expresses appreciation of the contribution his genius has made to the quickening of theological thought. In Germany it seems not only to accentuate the tendency to pure transcendentalism, but also to issue in a Biblicist literalism or fundamentalism, which is foreign to Barth himself but seems to grip his followers.

A note of American criticism of European church-state relations might well conclude a report on Euro-

pean Christianity. The intimate relation between church and state, prevalent almost everywhere in Europe, preserves the formal idea of a national Christian culture. But these Christian nations of Europe are certainly as secular as our own country and possibly more so. And there is no line where the church ends and the national society begins. There is, therefore, no challenge for men to declare themselves for the Christian faith, a challenge which sectarian Christianity introduced into American church life, and for which we may well be grateful. Furthermore there is not sufficient tension between the church as a community of grace and the national community under this official arrangement. Our own American Christianity may seem very heterogenous from the standpoint of Europe. But it has some genuine contributions to make to the ecumenical movement. One of these is certainly the sense of the church as a unique community of grace, distinguished from the general community. Europe thinks we do not define the church with sufficient theological precision. But an American may well counter that Europe has all the theological definitions; but the substance is frequently lacking.

Is It Time to Preach Optimism?

ROGER L. SHINN

IT is a common complaint against Christian interpretations of life that they are not optimistic enough. Such protests, which came in past years from the proud confidence of secularism, express themselves now in more plaintive, and very sincere, tones. Why, it is asked, does Christian theology want to undermine our hopes? This may have been all right in days of proud self-confidence, but it is out of place now. The attack upon utopianism is like beating a dead horse, because no one feels very utopian these days. Contemporary society has been a whipping-boy for the theologians long enough; now smarting from the lash of war and disillusion, it needs a message that will rub salve, not salt, on its wounds. People need encouragement, a message of confidence. They will not struggle to improve themselves or society unless they can hope to accomplish something. The church should fight cynicism, not optimism. So the protest runs.

The argument must be considered, if only because it is so common. We may suspect it, because it comes so often from those who have indulged false hopes in the past. We may question whether American pride and self-confidence have been so humbled as many seem to think; a first-hand acquaintance with even a small part of the suffering in other parts of the globe often produces a revulsion against the scramble for money, luxury, and power in America.

But it is only fair to look for the inherent merits in the idea.

Two suggestions offer themselves. First, a genuine Christianity will take a soberly hopeful view of what can be accomplished. It will not shout pessimism for its own sake. If there is in some preachers or theologians a sadistic strain which loves to torment sinful humanity for the sake of the torment, it has nothing to do with the Gospel. Men ready to acknowledge God's sovereignty and obey His will can always find areas of human life open to transformation. The Christian hope is not the salvation of the isolated mystic but the communal vision of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom with meaning for every human situation. A creative Christianity will always work for the gains which can be made in the structure of any society.

Second, prophetic religion rightly shows a tendency to buck the historical tide. Prophecy emphasizes condemnation against the proud and threatens destruction to the mighty, but offers comfort and hope to the humble and penitent. This is not a vacillating message; rather it is the proclamation of a faith that remains consistent while circumstances shift. Thus our best Christian leaders have maintained a consistent message through recent years, in contrast to the extremes of enthusiasm and despair of the common mood. But Christianity and

prophetic faith do not simply pour out hope, whenever people feel bad. A true Christian hope, by its very nature, is available only to the humble and penitent, and our most earnest advocates of optimistic preaching can hardly claim that America, disconcerted though she be, qualifies very far here.

Recognizing the place for a genuine religious hope born of faith and for an enthusiasm for realization of social and ethical gains in any historical situation, Christianity will nevertheless, when true to itself, set its face against utopianism or popular brands of optimism. For doing this it will find reasons which are purely *religious* and reasons related to *social-ethical* strategy.

The religious reasons are two: (1) Christianity will be truthful. A faith that is sustained by a genuine hope will not need to peddle illusions. It will not cover up the hard facts of history, either to please the crowds or to give people what they think they need. It will not succumb to the fatal temptation to cry peace when there is no peace. No amount of longing for comfort justifies the Christian in bending the truth of facts or of faith to meet the demand.

(2) Christianity will always see the need to strip life of pretext and make men face the essential religious problem. It will recognize with St. Augustine that the peace of this world, valuable though it is, is always insecure. Men, in difficult times as well as in happier ones, are always ready to find rest in a false security. It is the drowning man who grasps after straws. Only the most empty preaching, lacking any real bulwark of confidence, will persuade men to put confidence in the straws which they so eagerly clutch.

There are some who will accept these religious reasons, but will still protest that such denials of easy optimism cut the nerve of social action. It is obvious that men will not usually struggle for justice unless they see some possibilities of attainment. Only a sadly inadequate Christian theology will deny the possibility of social achievements which have a genuine significance as service of God and as betterment of human life. But this is not inconsistent with a radical criticism of illusory utopias. There is no *logical* reason why a Christian, recognizing that the Kingdom of God is more than the social order which he can build, should not continue to work for the best attainable embodiment of justice and love in the social situation. The *psychological* problem is slightly more difficult, but should not be insurmountable. A physician would be a fool to try to stimulate his morale by thinking that he could keep a patient alive forever. But the inevitability of death does not keep doctors from working to heal patients every day. So the inevitability of human sin, corrupting any social order, should not hinder honest, vigorous efforts to improve existing situations.

We may go beyond this and point out three positive reasons which make a criticism of popular forms of optimism an actual asset to Christian social-ethical strategy.

(1) False optimism breeds the self-righteousness shared by the fanatic and the complacent man. The illusion that a certain system embodies *the* answer to human ills produces a warped judgment of all who stand in the way. If the proletarian revolution, or the preservation of free enterprise, or anything else is regarded as the guarantee of utopia, then almost any conceivable means is justified in its behalf. One more reign of terror is only a small evil compared with the good to be gained, or preserved. Religious and ideological struggles reach an uncontrolled fury, unless a transcendent Kingdom of God stands as a criterion and a judgment, producing humility and repentance. If any think that America has been shaken severely enough to need no criticism of false securities, the report of any week's debates in congress, or any poll of public attitudes about Germany, Japan, or the atomic bomb should be an eye-opener. Far too many Americans share the viewpoint of the taxi driver who within the last year told his passenger, a Japanese Christian woman visiting this country: "You should repent. America is always right."

(2) The end result of fanaticism, or of any misplaced confidence, is disillusion. The facts of history operate against utopian dreams, leaving the dreamers either smiling ineffectually or giving up. If a Christian realism falls short of the enthusiasm of fanaticism which fights for the perfect historical future, it has a greater sustaining power than illusory optimism. It has been widely recognized that one reason for the problem of American morale in facing the problems centering around the Second World War was the disillusion resulting from the deflation of hopes centering around the First. Numerous reporters, trying to understand the terrible despair of German youth today, have recognized that it is caused not only by defeat and suffering but also by the collapse of the fanatical hopes built around false gods. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., writing a book review last summer, said that St. Augustine, whatever moderns might think of him, would not have been startled by the turn of events in modern Russia. The whole problem was recognized by Arthur Koestler, although he would not agree with this analysis, in the title of an article in 1943: "We need a fraternity of pessimists to lift the world out of the historical wave in which it flounders."¹ The man who places his hopes entirely in the achievements of historical and social life subjects himself to all the fluctuations and caprices of history. In contrast the great Christians of prophetic and apocalyptic faith have found the confidence and motive power for serving God

¹ N. Y. Sunday Times Magazine, Nov. 7.

and their fellowmen, whether in times of cheerfulness or of pain.

(3) Uncritical hopefulness leads to an inept use of tactics to achieve social goals. Trying to leap the ditch between a given situation and an ideal solution, it is likely to land in the middle of the ditch. Those who refuse to choose between live alternatives in the political world because none offers an ideal line of action are likely to find themselves doing nothing effective at all. This is real futility, however ambitious its hopes. If a situation somewhere in the world demands attention, the only meaningful plans are those which will have an effect in that place. The uncritical idealist wants to avoid the use of force or of power politics, but he seldom asks himself what he would do if he were in Secretary Marshall's shoes. As Emil Brunner has said, "a heedless pacifism can render the very people defenseless who would be most capable of creating a peaceful order in the world if they had the necessary means of power at their disposal."² If conscientious scruples prevent some nations from indulging in power politics, the field is left open for the less scrupulous to have their way in the areas where power politics is undoubtedly effective. A Christian can recognize this, and still avoid the error of uncritical optimism about victory in the power struggle. Faith in a transcendent God makes him critical of political measures, even while he recognizes the need of political means to reach political ends.

A Christian who criticizes the movement for an immediate world government today is met in some circles with raised eyebrows. Surely the Christian should favor this, he is told. Perhaps it is not quite attainable, but we should try for the best. Better to err on the side of the angels than of the devils. And it is true that the Christian does feel more comfortable attacking nationalism than world government with its measure of inherent validity. But this approach can make nonsense of the tactical problem involved in world order. Already the advocates of world government are moving in two opposite directions: one group says we must refrain from opposing Russian interests because that destroys the possibility of international unity; the other group says that we must organize the world government without Russia if she is unwilling to go alone. The latter idea—world government without Russia—is a contradiction in terms. The former alternative may lead to the negation of any balance of international order; for to yield in every case to the demands of the ambitious and powerful is to destroy the meaning of government in trying to achieve it.

Let no one think that this is an article in praise of pessimism. The whole point is to find the means of getting things done. What is sought is a facing of

our contemporary situation in a way that will enable an honest and vigorous struggle for social gains, avoiding both superficial optimism and despair. The best starting point is a realistic view of human history, recognizing both the attainments which social organization can make and the danger—call it "ideological taint" or "original sin," as you please—inherent in any solution.

Further, this is no justification of complacent acceptance of situations with unsatisfactory alternatives. Although the Christian must choose the best course of action in the immediate situation, his faith in a transcendent God shows him that no alternative is perfect and calls him to repentance for his share in the order which permits only inadequate choices. Real repentance is never complacent. It will seize every opportunity—and there are many today—to change the circumstances which make available only grim and dangerous alternatives.

The late Archbishop Temple affords a worthy example of a combination of idealistic vision and practical shrewdness. He was capable of advocating such radical social changes that he felt obliged to defend himself against the charge of utopianism, but he kept his feet on the ground. "A statesman," he wrote, "who supposes that a mass of citizens can be governed without appeal to their self-interest is living in a dreamland and is a public menace. The art of Government in fact is the art of so ordering life that self-interest prompts what justice demands."³ Understanding this, he knew also that man is capable of response to God's Gospel. "He must be treated as what he actually is, but always with a view to what in God's purpose he is destined to become."⁴ Such a view offers the highest conceivable estimate of the significance of social action, with a realistic criticism of naive optimism.

Sidney Hook, vigorous radical and foe of religion, in a recent statement of his belief in a democratic socialism, has offered this fighting faith for social action: "To be resigned to the contingency of defeat, but to fight like hell for the best possible chance in every alternative, is what the good life in action means."⁵ This is an almost perfect statement of a Christian view of social action, on the practical level. Christians should find such action easier because of their faith in a God whose service requires a constant fight in every political situation but whose purpose and will are not contained within any contingent program. With confidence that His will can never be finally defeated, Christians can fight boldly where justice and human welfare are at stake and victory hangs in the balance.

³ *Christianity and Social Order* (Penguin), p. 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ Quoted from the *Partisan Review* in *Time*, Feb. 17, 1947.

² *Justice and the Social Order* (Harper), p. 257.

The World Church: News and Notes

England: Student Mood—1947

(Note: The following comments upon the state of mind of the English university student were made by Tilly Weinstock, South of England Women's Traveling Secretary. They are reprinted from the *Student Movement*, publication of the British Student Christian Movement.)

"When one begins to talk to individuals one also finds an all-pervading feeling of frustration. There is really nothing much to live for, except the hope of getting a decent well-paid job, or, for the women, the hope of getting married before they get to the stage of old maids or schoolma'ams. There is nothing much to live for, because now the war is over it does not seem at all clear that we are carrying out the high aims for which professedly we fought it, and the student, as much as any other member of our society, sees the general hopelessness of the international situation and feels that there is nothing he can do about it.

"There is a marked, though good-humored, dislike of America, and a desperate attempt to like Russia, because if we don't the war will be on us before we know where we are. And over all hangs the Damocles sword of 'The Next War,' which brings with it the threat of the Atomic Bomb. Added to this there is the feeling of being regimented and directed by the Government, or perhaps the University authorities, but in any case by outside powers over whom the student has no control. All this makes students more concerned than ever to live for the moment. Idealists have practically disappeared from the University, and the Liberals are often taunted that their policy is too idealistic and not practical enough. On the other hand students are still prepared to help where they can see a real need and the way of relieving it. For instance, in one University most of the students gave up the whole of their sweet ration to send to starving European countries; and the foreign student, whether he be African, Indian or Czech, will find little race prejudice among his fellow students, however much he may find outside the University.

"There is no youthful idealism in the University, but there is a new recognition that spiritual values are necessary, and an acknowledgment of Christianity as a 'Good Thing,' though there are still too few who realize that there can be no Christian ethics without faith in Christ, and that the Sermon on the Mount cannot be taken out of the context of the New Testament."

European Church Leaders Speak in New York

Leading Protestant and Orthodox churchmen of Europe, in the United States for the meeting of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches, reported to a group of American leaders on the situation in Europe. The meeting was sponsored by the Committee on Cooperation with the Churches of Europe of Church World Service. Among those who spoke were Dr. J. Hutchison Cockburn, director of the World Council Department of Reconstruction and Inter-church

Aid, formerly moderator of the Church of Scotland; Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council and president of the World Student Christian Federation; Dr. Marc Boegner, president of the French Evangelical Church and World Council advisory committee chairman; and Dr. Alphonse Koechlin, president of the Swiss Protestant Federation.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft commended the American churches for the way in which they have helped their European fellow-Christians. The task of reconstruction is an "ecumenical job," he said. "We are engaged," he went on, "in going against a current in church history which has existed for centuries; we are trying to reverse that current, a very difficult task, but one in which we must go forward in complete solidarity." He pointed out that a kind of spiritual vacuum has been created by the end of the war in which there is a danger of disillusionment on the part of European churches. Two years ago the churches were the focal point of spiritual resistance and the source of spiritual power but now a great fatigue has set in. There are, however, little groups of men who are hanging on. Neither an extreme optimism nor pessimism is justified, according to 't Hooft. The most important fact is that Europe is at the present time extremely fluid, ready to move in any direction.

"The American churches must be assured that they are not pouring water into a bucket without a bottom when they help Europe—there is a response."

Pastor Marc Boegner assured the group that what the American churches have done has greatly strengthened the churches of France. "There is a real possibility for a spiritual evangelism in France today," said Boegner. "New doors are open and we must go through with your help for the salvation of our country."

Dr. Cockburn warned against thinking of Europe as a whole. Actually each country presents a different and distinct problem with respect to the churches. He suggested that there were four very hopeful signs about the present European church situation. First the churches have been shaken and a shaken church is open to new life. Second, the churches are working together in a way they never thought possible several years ago. Third, there are very real new evangelical opportunities. Fourth, the effort being made is definitely an ecumenical effort. He concluded, "What is at stake is nothing less than the Kingship of Christ."

World Council Hopes For Orthodox Participation

Current efforts to secure the full participation of more Eastern Orthodox churches in the World Council of Churches are proceeding with "gratifying" results, it was reported by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft of Geneva, Switzerland, general secretary of the Council, whose provisional committee recently held its first American meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania.

The patriarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, Dr. 't Hooft told the opening session of the

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three-day meeting, is giving "serious attention" to the question of its relationship with the Council. Greek Orthodox churches, he added, have already indicated their willingness to participate as full members in the first World Assembly of the Council, scheduled to be held at Amsterdam, Holland, in the summer of 1948.

According to Dr. 't Hooft, one of the major obstacles confronting the future relations of the World Council with the Eastern Orthodox churches is the impression that the Council is "largely a Western, and more specifically, an Anglo-Saxon organization which identifies itself consciously or unconsciously with the concerns and interests of the Western nations."

"We will have to make it very clear in word and deed," he declared, "that such is not the case."

The goal of the World Council, said Dr. 't Hooft, is to achieve an "ecumenical fellowship in Christ." He described an "ecumenical" relationship as one which "includes but also transcends all nationalities and races and which must therefore be independent of all political constellations."

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Korea: Missionary Help

The North American Mission Boards, through the Korean Committee, have been endeavoring to exert their influence toward a solution of the problem of military occupation in Korea, which would make possible for Korea a free and democratic government, and resolutions from the mission boards have been sent to the Department of State with the hope that they will be given consideration when negotiations regarding the future of Korea are taking place.

In the field of higher education in Korea there has been need for greater coordination. An agreement was made on a Federation of Christian Institutions of Higher Learning.

Recognizing that the people of Korea will need to give attention to the matter of public health, the mission boards are expressing their willingness to cooperate with them in a program of medical work, which will include not only care of the sick, but health programs and the training of doctors and nurses.

The Christian Literature Society of Korea has been reorganized, and literature production and distribution will have an important place in the missionary program. A study is being made of literature available in Korea and new literature needed.

In order to have full discussion on the field regarding plans for work in Korea, the North American boards are planning to send a joint deputation to Korea in May and June of this year. E. P. S. Geneva.

New Guinea: The Church Unbeaten

The Rt. Rev. G. H. Cranswick, D.D., President of the Board of Missions of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania, visited the former Mandated Territory of New Guinea. In his report to the National Missionary Council of Australia Bishop Cranswick summed up his impressions as follows:

"One of my discoveries, as I travelled in North New Guinea, was to find a Wounded Church. A church wounded physically, as many of its members had been wounded, maimed and killed as an outcome of the war. A church wounded morally. The presence of so many white men meant that the Papuans had to safeguard their womenfolk. A church wounded spiritually, because of the presence of large numbers of white men to whom religion meant nothing, and who had not hesitated to give expression to their views. A church wounded mentally, because of the crushing in on it of western civilization with all its conflicting ideologies.

"But a church completely unbeaten, starting in every way to rebuild again, and a church wonderful in its worship. There was a reality and freshness in the church service, not found in many of our own churches."

E. P. S. Geneva.

Author in This Issue

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